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(CIVILETTI-BILLY)

(BY GREGORY GORDON)

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- ATTORNEY GENERAL BENJAMIN CIVILETTI RECEIVED AN INTELLIGENCE TIP IN APRIL THAT BILLY CARTER ACCEPTED MONEY FROM LIBYA, BUT WITHHELD DETAILS FROM INVESTIGATORS FOR TWO MONTHS, THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY.

THE DEPARTMENT INDICATED IN A STATEMENT CIVILETTI WAS ASKED NOT TO REVEAL THE "EXTREMELY SENSITIVE" CLASSIFIED INFORMATION, EVEN TO HIS AIDES.

OFFICIALS SAID PRIVATELY THAT DISCLOSURE OF THE INFORMATION TO INVESTIGATORS IN THE BILLY CARTER CASE MIGHT HAVE COMPROMISED INTELLIGENCE SOURCES.

HOWEVER, WHEN HE RECEIVED THE TIP, CIVILETTI ADVISED ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL PHILIP HEYMANN THE PROBE SHOULD NOT BE CLOSED WITHOUT THE INVESTIGATORS BEING TOLD OF CERTAIN INTELLIGENCE, DESCRIBED BY SOURCES AS TOO SENSITIVE TO USE IN A COURT CASE.

JOEL LISKE, CHIEF OF THE DEPARTMENT'S FOREIGN AGENTS' REGISTRATION UNIT, FINALLY RECEIVED INFORMATION FROM "MULTIPLE SOURCES" IN EARLY JUNE THAT BILLY HAD ACCEPTED \$220,000 FROM THE LIBYANS. CIVILETTI THEN MADE THE INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO INVESTIGATORS, THE STATEMENT SAID.

UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE DEPARTMENT, BILLY CARTER FINALLY SIGNED A CONSENT DECREE JULY 14 UNDER WHICH HE REGISTERED AS A LIBYAN AGENT.

THE DEPARTMENT SAID "ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTS ARE NOW IN THE HANDS OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEES."

SEN. BIRCH BAYH, D-IND., CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE PANEL INVESTIGATING BILLY CARTER, SAID AFTER REVIEWING THE DOCUMENTS HE UNDERSTOOD CIVILETTI "HANDLED THE INFORMATION IN THE WAY HE WAS URGED TO HANDLE IT BY AN INDIVIDUAL IN THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY." HE SAID IT WAS NOT UNUSUAL FOR INTELLIGENCE DATA TO BE CONSIDERED "UNUSABLE" -- AND THAT IT APPEARED CIVILETTI "RESPONDED PROPERLY."

BAYH SAID CIVILETTI WAS TOLD "IN THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE TERMS" NOT TO PROVIDE THE INFORMATION TO HIS INVESTIGATORS.

THE DISCLOSURES RAISED NEW QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY -- PRESUMABLY THE CIA -- IN THE BILLY CARTER MATTER. DALE PETERSON, A CIA SPOKESMAN, SAID TODAY HIS AGENCY WOULD NOT COMMENT, BUT WOULD PROVIDE A FULL REPORT TO CONGRESS.

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